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THE SECRETARY- GENERAL

MESSAGE TO THE INTEGRATED CONFERENCE OF BETTER AIR QUALITY AND REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FORUM

<u>Colombo, 19-21 November 2014</u>

I send my warm greetings to this important conference, and I congratulate the Government of Sri Lanka for hosting.

Sustainable transport is a topic central to any discussion of development.   People have a right to clean air and a right to travel safely. Sustainable transport is more important than ever at a time when Asia and the world at large face unprecedented levels of urbanization.

Air pollution, both outdoor and indoor, threatens the quality of life in many of Asia's cities. Traffic congestion and road accidents cause considerable economic losses to cities and countries. The transport sector is becoming the fastest-growing source of green-house-gas emissions.

A systematic shift to sustainable transport, with cleaner vehicles, more efficient public transport and dedicated bicycle and walking lanes, is critical for a cleaner and safer future. As the Bali Declaration on Vision Three Zeros said, we need Zero Congestion, Zero Pollution and Zero Accidents.

In September, I organized a successful Climate Summit to galvanize the global community into action on climate change. Participants recognized that transport is a key sector for reducing emissions. They made important commitments in electric transportation, railways, public transport, fuel economy and green freight.

I have also convened a High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, to engage in innovative thinking and provide leadership within the transport sector.

Thank you for coming together to advance all of these efforts. I call upon the participating national governments, city and local authorities, private sector, NGOs, the scientific and research community, international organizations and donors to continue your essential work to develop smart, integrated solutions for clean air and sustainable transport.

I wish you a successful conference.